



St. Philip's Religious Formation
620 Beltrami Avenue NW
Bemidji, Minnesota 56601
218-444-5849

August/September 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians of Children Preparing for First Eucharist
and/or First Reconciliation This Year,

When your child was baptized, the priest addressed you saying:

"You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so, you are accepting the responsibility of training him/her in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him/her up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?"

and you responded: "We do!"

This is why you take such an important, active part in the preparation of your child for First Eucharist and First Reconciliation. At St. Philip's the family model is used in preparing children for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. In this model parents are responsible for preparing their child to receive First Reconciliation and/or First Eucharist. Parents you are the primary teachers of the Catholic faith to your child. The time spent in teaching your child about our faith will touch the heart of your child forever.

At St. Philip's, preparation for First Eucharist and First Reconciliation is offered once a year regardless of whether your child attends St. Philip's Religious Formation or St. Philip's School. Children who are in at least 2nd grade are eligible for both First Eucharist and First Reconciliation. It is recommended that children receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before receiving the sacrament of Eucharist. However, parents may delay the reception of a sacrament of Reconciliation and/or Eucharist, if they feel their child is not ready.

Here is what you need to do as part of the preparation for these Sacraments:

It is the Parish Policy that a parent/guardian attends the Parent Session for the particular Sacrament you will be preparing your child for (even if you attended a session or two last year or have gone to a session in the past). This Parent Session will give you a general overview of the Church's teachings on Sacraments, bring you up to date about First Eucharist/ First Reconciliation and provide you with the materials you need to prepare your child at home. This is a parent only session.

Prayer Partner Weekend is where your child is presented to the faith community at one of the weekend Masses (depending upon which one you signed up for at the Parent Session) as he/she begins his/her journey of

preparing for the Sacrament. At this time, your child will receive their book. It is also a time for the faith community to keep you and your child in their prayers as you begin preparation.

Following approximately eight to ten weeks of preparation with your child, the children attend a Saturday morning session called Activity Morning. This is a time where the children meet together, do various activities and enhance their understanding of the Sacrament.

We hope that this process of preparation for these Sacraments will lead you and your child to a meaningful and joyous celebration of the Sacrament for their first time. First Eucharist and First Reconciliation Guidelines are attached.

The dates pertaining to
First Eucharist and First Reconciliation
are listed on the attached sheet.

It is essential that you and your child be ready to commit
to these dates for adequate preparation.

There is a Sacrament Materials Fee of \$35.00 for each sacrament. This can be paid with the Religious Formation fee or at the Parent Session. If needed, there are scholarship funds available, please contact the Religious Formation Office to make arrangements. No one will be denied access to the Religious Formation classes or Sacraments because of inability to pay the fee.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the Religious Formation Office - 444-5849 or email kjensen@stphilipsbemidji.org

Peace!

Kris Jensen
Religious Formation Director

Sacrament Dates

First Reconciliation

Wednesday, September 30, 6:30 p.m.

- First Reconciliation Parent Session

Saturday & Sunday, October 3 and 4

- First Reconciliation Prayer Partner Weekend

Saturday, November 21, 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

- First Reconciliation Activity Morning

Saturday, December 5 - First Reconciliation Celebrated

- 9:00 a.m. all day on the hour until 4:00 p.m.

First Eucharist

Wednesday, January 27, 6:30 p.m.

- First Eucharist Parent Session

Saturday & Sunday, February 6 and 7

- First Eucharist Prayer Partner Weekend

Saturday, April 24, 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

- First Eucharist Activity Morning

Sunday, May 2

- First Eucharist Celebrated at 2:00 p.m.

In celebration of the Diocese of Crookston's 100 years, we will be celebrating First Eucharist with all the children and their families of our parish together at one joyful Mass.

Sacrament Preparation Expectations First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation

Celebrations of First Eucharist, First Reconciliation, and Confirmation will be once a year. Preparations for these sacraments will be coordinated through the Religious Formation Office regardless of whether the child attends St. Philip's School or Religious Formation.

It is recommended that children who are at least in 2nd grade prepare for both the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist.

The child preparing for the Sacrament of First Reconciliation and/or First Eucharist must be enrolled in St. Philip's Religious Formation or St. Philip's School.

It is recommended that children receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before receiving First Eucharist. Parents may delay the reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and/or Eucharist if they feel their child is not ready.

A parent must attend the sacrament parent session, regardless if he/she attended a prior year or numerous years. If a child is preparing to receive both Reconciliation and Eucharist, a parent must attend both parent sessions.

Children in Religious Formation who are preparing for First Eucharist, First Reconciliation or Confirmation who are habitually absent from class may have the sacrament delayed. The Pastor and Religious Formation Director will make the determination. See the Attendance Policy in the Religious Formation Handbook.

Confirmation is a three year formation program beginning in 9th grade with the reception of the Sacrament in the spring of 11th grade. Youth are expected to attend Religious Formation class during this time three year time period.

The best preparation parents can give their child is to practice and live the faith. One of the most important ways to do this is regular attendance at Mass. An integral part of our children's faith formation is participation in Sunday Liturgy. While completing the sacrament lessons and attending Religious Formation class or St. Philip's school is important for the practical knowledge that is learned, faith should also be experienced. To be part of the parish family, to worship together each Sunday is to be part of faith in action. Parents, we expect that you will give your child these experiences – preparing for the sacraments at home, attendance at Religious Formation or St. Philip's school and Church – so that he/she will be encouraged to practice and live his/her faith.

ST. PHILIP'S PARISH FIRST RECONCILIATION GUIDELINES

At least one parent of a child preparing for First Reconciliation shall attend the First Reconciliation Parent Session. The Parent Session will introduce catechetical teachings regarding the seven sacraments, with the main focus on the Reconciliation. Parents will receive information, materials and requirements to assist them with the preparation of their child for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is the parent's responsibility to prepare their child for First Reconciliation.

Children will be enrolled for the preparation of First Reconciliation before the faith community on Prayer Partner Weekend. The child will be recognized by the faith community and the faith community will keep the child and their family in their prayers during their preparation of Reconciliation.

Following approximately 8 weeks of parent preparation, the child will attend First Reconciliation Activity Morning. All the children preparing for First Reconciliation will gather to participate in various activities that will enhance their understanding of the Sacrament. Parents of First Reconciliation children will present the activities under the direction of the Religious Formation Director.

These requirements are meant to lead the child and parents to a meaningful and joyful celebration of the sacrament, not only for the first time, but each time thereafter.

ST. PHILIP'S PARISH FIRST EUCHARIST PREPARATION GUIDELINES

At least one parent of a child preparing for First Eucharist shall attend the First Eucharist Parent Session. The Parent Session will introduce catechetical teachings regarding the seven sacraments, with the main focus on the Eucharist. Parents will receive information, materials and requirements to assist them with the preparation of their child for the Sacrament of Eucharist. It is the parent's responsibility to prepare their child for First Eucharist.

Children will be enrolled for the preparation of First Eucharist before the faith community on Prayer Partner Weekend. The child will be recognized by the faith community and the faith community will keep the child and their family in their prayers during their preparation of First Eucharist.

Following approximately 10 weeks of parent preparation, the child will attend First Eucharist Activity Morning. All the children preparing for First Eucharist, along with a parent will gather to participate in various activities that will enhance their understanding of the Sacrament. Parents of First Eucharist children will present the activities under the direction of the Religious Formation Director.

These requirements are meant to lead the child and parents to a meaningful and joyful celebration of the sacrament, not only for the first time, but each time thereafter. "Catechesis for the Eucharist recognizes the Eucharist as the heart of Christian life. It helps people understand that celebration of the Eucharist nourishes the faithful with Christ, the bread of Life, in order that, filled with the love of God and neighbor, they may become more and more a people acceptable to God and build up the Christian community with the works of charity, service, missionary activity, and witness." (National Catechetical Directory #121)